

Opportunities Lost Due to the Cost of the Iraq War

The Congressional Budget Office pegged the total cost of the Iraq war to date at \$290 billion. Each and every month we remain caught in the quagmire of Iraq we spend between \$8 billion and \$9 billion.

Iraq is a tragedy in terms of lives lost, taxpayers' dollars expended, American worldwide influence dissipated, and opportunities missed.

Here are a few examples of the investments in America that are not being made because of the financial cost of Iraq.

- For the cost of slightly less than three days of the Iraq war, we could enroll the 100,000 Priority 8 veterans, offer long-term care to 2,300 veterans, and eliminate the 95,000 claim backlog for veterans' benefits (\$885 million).

- For the cost of four days of the Iraq war, we could ensure that all of the cargo carried in passenger airplanes is screened for explosives (\$1 billion).

- For the cost of fewer than six days of the war in Iraq, we could fund 6,000 additional border patrol agents so that the National Guard does not have to help secure our border (\$1.4 billion).

- For the cost of just seven days of the Iraq war, we could protect Americans from a nuclear device smuggled into our ports by funding equipment to screen all containers destined for the U.S. and staff to review all manifests at ports that ship directly to the United States (\$1.67 billion).

- For the cost of 15 days of the Iraq war, we could vaccinate every child in the United States against serious childhood diseases with all recommended vaccines (\$4 billion).

- For the cost of just 20 days of the Iraq war, we could help protect Americans from an attack similar to the London train bombings by better monitoring rail and transit systems and mitigating known vulnerabilities (\$5.4 billion).

- For the cost of just 24 days of the Iraq war, we could fund all of the remaining port security needs estimated by the

Coast Guard (\$6.4 billion).

• For the cost of almost two months of the war in Iraq, we could hire 460,000 teachers across America to lower average class sizes to 18 students (\$15 billion).

• For the cost of two months of the war in Iraq, we could eliminate the backlog of repairs in our National Parks, National Forests, and wildlife refuges, as well as make needed repairs to all Indian schools (\$16 billion).

• For the cost of just over two months of the Iraq war, we could provide basic health insurance to every child in the U.S. currently lacking coverage (\$17 billion).

• For the cost of a little more than two months of the Iraq war, we could pay one year of tuition and fees at a four-year public university for the 3 million high school seniors who graduated this spring (\$18 billion).

• For the cost of less than two and a half months of the Iraq war, we could cover the annual cost of renewing America's wastewater infrastructure (\$19.4 billion).

• For the cost of roughly four months of the Iraq war, we could fight global warming and our dependence on foreign energy by restoring our investment in energy research and development to the level of the Carter Administration (\$32 billion).

• For the cost of just over 5 months of the Iraq war, we could help the 7 million Americans who are currently unemployed improve their job skills to find jobs in growth fields (\$42 billion).

• For the cost of just over 5 months of the Iraq war, we could provide a 20 percent pay raise to 3 million public school teachers (\$43 billion).

• For the cost of roughly five and a half months of the Iraq war, we could eliminate all Federal income taxes for people making \$50,000 a year or less (\$45 billion).

• For the cost of nine months of the Iraq war, we could fund all of the communication interoperability and protective gear needs of our nation's first responders as estimated by the Council on Foreign Relations (\$73 billion).

• For the cost of twelve months of the Iraq war, we could pay the full 40 percent Federal share of the Individuals with Disabilities Act for six years, fulfilling a decades-old pledge of fiscal relief to local communities and improving educational opportunities for 6.9 million children with disabilities (\$94 billion).